

2015 London Tree and Woodland Awards

Winner of the Acorn Award: Eugene Clerkin



Eugene Clerkin (centre) receiving his award at City Hall in May 2015 from Roger Evans (Deputy Mayor of London) and Ian Gambles (Director of Forestry Commission England).

The award is given for an individual member of the public who has made a particular contribution to promoting or conserving trees.

The awards panel were impressed by the longevity and amount of time that Eugene has put into voluntary work in Hackney, and how his work has helped produce a valuable stock of young trees for planting in the area.

Eugene said “I’m very grateful for this award, but would like to highlight what volunteering has given me:

- The joy of seeing a seed first germinate and sometime later seeing it as a tree in a park;
- The joy in watering a perched small tree in a drought and observe it recover moisture in its leaves and strengthen in developing its own rooting system
- To see landscapes change over time with increased foliage and cool air
- To see children and adults find enjoyment in relation to trees is what makes me grow more
- To experience the vulnerability of a small seedling and know you are aiding its growth and potential is getting not giving.”

About Eugene

Eugene is one of the founding members of the Tree Musketeers and prior to that a Hackney Tree Warden. He has been dedicated and committed to volunteering his time and efforts in the planting, protecting, preserving and growing trees in the London Borough of Hackney since 1998.

He has been caring for young trees including watering, mulching and maintaining stakes and guards. His work with local people and the Council and other organisations to promote tree care in Hackney has raised awareness of the benefits of trees to the quality of life of Hackney residents.

These tireless efforts and thousands of hours in all weathers, volunteering his time freely has made a beneficial difference in increasing and protecting Hackneys tree resources borough wide. Eugene has always been cheerful with a friendly welcoming smile and shares his experience and knowledge gained in welcoming new volunteers into activities with the Tree Musketeers.

The Tree Musketeers



The Tree Musketeers are a group of volunteers formed twelve years ago who plant, protect and care for the trees that we plant in the Borough of Hackney. The group is volunteer led and activities cover all aspects of tree care, including planting, mulching, watering, pruning, adjusting tree ties etc. and checking that the tree is healthy. There is a strong social aspect to our activities with no official membership but volunteers join in the enthusiasm of the members. We liaise with the Local Authority and plant the number of trees that we know we can provide full follow-up care for.

Project Activities

Volunteers organise action days throughout the year and these take place approximately every three weeks, or more often, depending on the season. They provide after-care for newly planted trees for



at least two years to ensure optimal potential for survival. For five years the majority of the trees planted have been grown, propagated or grafted by the volunteers at the Hackney Community Tree Nursery, the aim being to nurse them until they can be planted out. In 2014 we planted over 180 trees in local parks, most of these were half standards grown.

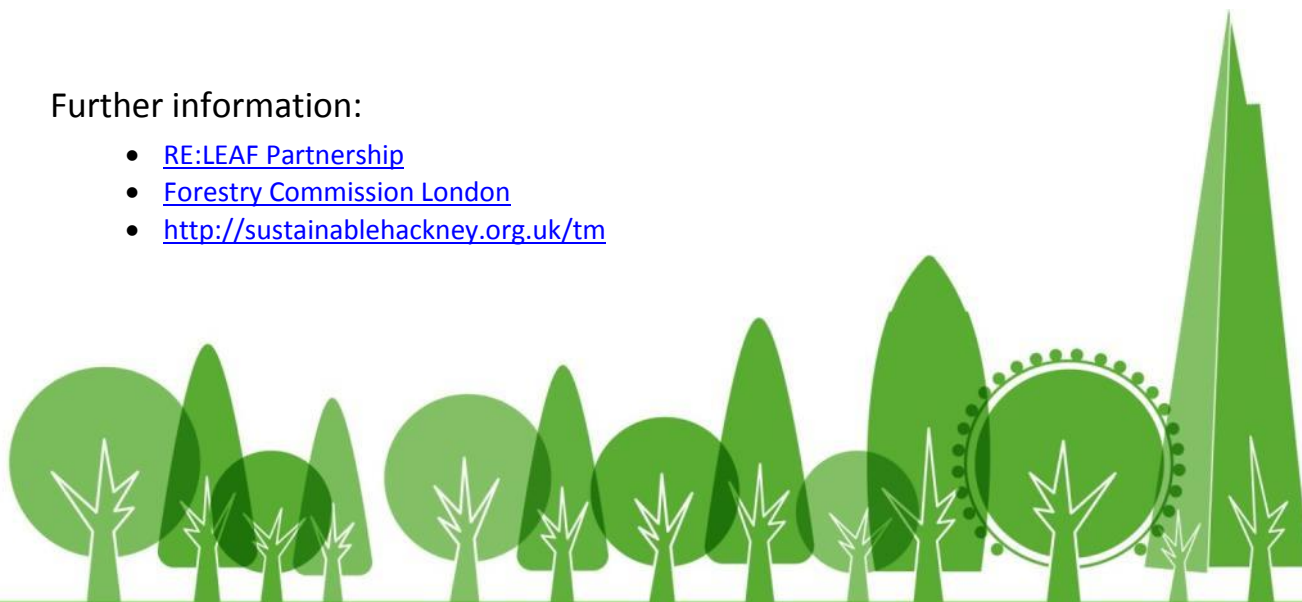
Project Outcomes



For 15 years the Tree Musketeers have planted trees in Hackney parks and this has increased the tree cover immensely in two parks in particular. The number of trees planted in that time is approximately 800 and the success rate of tree survival is over 98%. There are over thirty active volunteers with another 80 to 100 who participate on a more irregular basis. Nine orchards have been planted in the borough and the volunteers have just delivered a Lottery funded one year course in Tree Care.

Further information:

- [RE:LEAF Partnership](#)
- [Forestry Commission London](#)
- <http://sustainablehackney.org.uk/tm>



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